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TOP SPIN

Superimposed over an aerial view of his World Faith Center, the titles indicated that the show was coming from Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and across the bottom of the screen, in type slightly too large, were the words, SPECIAL TELECAST, and you knew right away they were going to air it after all.

The choir sang the opening hymn beautifully. It was celebratory but mournful, and you realized how good the choir was and that you had never noticed that before. (And two days later you would realize why: Because they had never sounded sincere before, even if they were, but today they sounded like they meant it; this time they felt pain.)

When they finished the long hymn, a ministry aide stepped up to the lectern and introduced a soloist who he said was going to sing "The Galilean." "I asked John to sing that this morning. It's one of my favorites," the aide told everyone. Into the solemn atmosphere of the church, John sang "The Galilean," clearly and movingly, in a measured voice that seemed to suspend the congregation in their own sadness and disbelief. As the hymn rose and swelled dramatically, members of the congregation and choir, as they had during the first song, raised their hands in front of them; the Pentecostal sign of feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The aide returned to the lectern and introduced Forest Hall, of the Louisiana District of the Assemblies of God. Hall, buttoning his jacket with one hand and holding a prepared statement in the other, lumbered up to the microphone. When he got there, he proclaimed enigmatically: "Isn't God good?" For a second it caught everyone by surprise. It seemed like the last thing anyone expected to hear, including Hall, who looked as if he'd just thought of it. As what he had said and what response was expected of them sunk into the crowd, they started to answer with "Amen"s and applause. "Doesn't He do good work? Praise the Lord!" continued Hall. More applause and agreement. He prefaced his speech by saying that he and all the District church officials loved Jimmy and Frances Swaggart, and their family, and were praying for them. Then he told of how Swaggart had made a full confession to church officials, of "specific incidents of moral failure."

Somehow, the discovery that Jimmy Swaggart spent time with prostitutes in motel rooms, which caused his fall from the lofty pulpit he'd built with more than thirty years of fire and brimstone, hit home a lot more impactfully than Jim Bakker's sex scandal. Partly because Swaggart was more righteous and more emphatic in his condemnation of anything less than the strictest adherence to the word of the Bible; and partly because he was a good deal smarter and more charismatic than Bakker. Bakker was always a joke, the head Mickey Mouse at a religious Disneyland. When his affair with Jessica Hahn was exposed it was amusing, like an off-color joke told at a boring party. It served, in part, to discredit the televangelical movement; it dented their industry and set back their dangerously expanding influence. But the Swaggart scandal stunned the country, Christian and secular. It torpedoed the industry. It may well be the event that collapses the evangelical movement as political force, which is, if you'll forgive the irony, a Godsend.

In the end, it is sad, and I think that is what has stunned everyone, because we didn't expect that reaction from ourselves. I was struck by the genuine shock *Swaggart* was in. *He* couldn't believe it. His emotional, public act of contrition was too fascinating to be merely something to gloat over. Because it wasn't just the abdication of a smooth TV preacher caught (just about literally) with his pants down. That part is sort of morally uplifting, like hearing of a used car salesman getting busted for turning odometers back. This was the equivalent of watching a pagan people trying to comprehend the death of a Caesar. It was remarkable to witness, and saddening.

Several times throughout his speech the congregation gave him standing ovations, and often arms rose as they had during the singing. When he finished, he turned away and tearfully embraced his wife. Others from the ministry, and District church officials, circled him, and after a long while just holding his family to him, he embraced them too. A ring of red-jacketed ushers formed around the group. The aide who had spoken before now entreated the congregation to come to the front and pray for Jimmy Swaggart. They filed out of the rows and came to the edge of the slightly raised platform and the ones in front knelt and prayed there while the ones behind them stood silently and bemused. The next day's *New York Times* showed a worshipper all alone, on his knee's, in the empty rows of chairs, bent over either crying or praying.

What struck me watching these proceedings was that this was supposed to have been a religious service and no service took place. The ministry and congregation, whether they realized it or not, effectively put a man ahead of God. And that, I think, was Swaggart's fatal flaw, that he had in essence elevated himself above the God he preached about.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

Bonnie Schiffman/ONYX

R. J. Capak/London Features

John Crawford

Top: *David Byrne launches* Naked. Above left: Naked Lunch's *William S. Burroughs.* Above: *Baboon Dooley, subject of John Crawford's newly published autobiography,* Baboon Gets Ahead in Life.

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Naked Heads

The Talking Heads explain their world to John Miller Chernoff, author of African Rhythm, African Sensibility.

Photograph by Barbara Walz/ONYX

I met David Byrne and Jerry Harrison in 1981. I didn't meet Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth until a few years later, though oddly enough, Chris and I attended the same high school in Pittsburgh, PA. I found actual common ground with the Talking Heads because I had spent most of the Seventies in Ghana studying music, and I had written a book entitled *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), in which I tried to explain something about the expressive purposes of African drumming and how it fits into the flow of African social life and the rhythms of African musical contexts. The book was written for a diverse audience, and as it happened—as it usually happens—musicians were the first to find it. The Talking Heads were among those who read it early, and when I became aware of their work in *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* and *Remain in Light*, I wrote a letter to David suggesting that we might hook up some time and talk. A similar letter from him crossed mine in the mail, resulting in our friendship and my work with him on *The Catherine Wheel*.

When David suggested that I be involved with that work, my first thought was, "Why in the world, if this guy's in New York, does he want me to come and deal with the percussion?" The answer only became apparent to me in the sessions. On *Big Business*, I played the parts of a drum orchestra with pencil erasers on a guitar while he worked the frets. On *Combat*, I played the parts of a different drum ensemble on a piano he had modified by wrapping masking tape around some of the strings. I could deal with any of that, but I realized that even the pop musicians I knew in Africa, who were so interested in developing a sound which could cross the ocean, might have been perplexed. On many levels, David and I were coming from the same place.

I was amazed at the way that David handled me both as a person and as a musical resource: he always seemed to have a very clear conception of his purpose, yet I felt as if he was never telling me what to do. It was a very congenial way to work. We all parted on very good terms when, after making my contribution, I went back to Africa to continue work on another book, to be published next year, called *A Drummer's Testament*. We stayed loosely in touch, and when *Spin* asked me to interview the Talking Heads, we all welcomed the opportunity to meet together again. Chris, Tina, Jerry, David and I sat down at David's place in New York; we started talking and as usual, we still hadn't finished talking when we said good-bye fourteen hours later.

SPIN: First, I want to congratulate you on your new record. It brings together a lot of different things you've done, and it retains your identity, but it also pulls together the beauty of many of the different influences you've been dealing with. To begin with, I want to ask why you decided to record in Paris with African musicians?

Chris Frantz: Paris in the summer versus Eighth Avenue in New York City is really not too hard a decision to make. And also we knew that there was a burgeoning cross-cultural or pan-cultural music scene in Paris. We were aware of that. We weren't aware of how much we would be able to take advantage of it, but as it happened, we got this guy, Wally Badarou, who is a friend of ours, to put the word out among quite a few different people, that we were coming to town, making a record, and looking for additional players. So by the time we got there, he had made sure that we got to know a few of the better players—guys who have actually played in studios before, as opposed to—well, we did get a couple of guys who hadn't been in a studio.

Jerry Harrison: We had this guy. I had known Fela's managers. When we talked to

Wally, I also talked to one guy, and one day he sent over a percussionist. This percussionist said, "I have to tighten the heads." "OK, great." So he goes into the bathroom, which was basically under the control room, and starts a fire and puts the drum over the fire! And flames are leaping up. We were coughing in the control room! We went to the bathroom, and there were big scorch marks on the wall.

SPIN: If I had to compare *Naked* to something, I would compare it to Manu Dibango, who fuses funk, reggae, African, and Caribbean beats all together, and it's a seamless whole. On many of his records, it's all there, yet it's not forced. And I think that *Naked* is also one of those few records that really brings it all together. *Naked* is something that you could take to Africa and play in a disco, and the people there would enjoy the grooves and be dancing to it. But it's Talking Heads, definitely and identifiably so. So maybe we should get into how you worked the music out for the new record. Did you work in the same way that you did in the past?

Jerry Harrison: Each time we set out to make an album, we set up different conditions for making the record, and by setting up the different conditions, we make sure that the albums sound different. For instance, for this record, starting here by composing the music as a foursome, but then going to Paris and adding other musicians, and then recording it all at once, it seems more jelled sometimes than if we had done it with studio overdubs. There's something about it just combining in the air that's different. And that was different from say, either *Remain in Light* or *Speaking in Tongues*, which were also composed music-first, because those were done as overdubs within the studio. So that was a great lesson from *Remain in Light*, that if you're going to work in that way—music first, then melody and lyrics second—it's good to make some decisions early on, because it makes the next process a little less like threading a needle. I think we're more sophisticated about it now.

David Byrne: I feel about those earlier records as if in some cases you were aware of how the pieces of the machine were put together. They fit together, but at the same time, you were aware that there was kind of an intricate clockwork thing that was being carefully put together in the recording studio. I was very happy with it. I felt it was exploratory. Not everything worked out great, but I think most of it did. But a lot of it has that feeling of being music that is looking to do this, do that, looking at all these kinds of things you can do. And often it doesn't explore those avenues. It just points to them, or dabbles in them a little bit, which was fine. Yes, the stuff worked out fine. I'm happy with it. I still listen to it sometimes. Usually I come back to it before we go in to make a record. I sometimes have a spot-list of a lot of the stuff from the past. I guess I listen to it to get a sense of: well, what kind of music do Talking Heads make? It's like taking stock of what we do, before stepping out into the unknown. Then, at that time I think we were taking our understanding of music we were hearing, and we were kind of translating it into our own terms, into electronic synthesizers and all kinds of stuff like that. And it was like a process of discovery, a way of discovering what it is. To me, the new album feels more like it was *played*, and that's the way it came out. Obviously the arrangements were worked out carefully, but it feels more like what it actually was: we pretty much played the stuff and then added the spice later on.

SPIN: How much did you rely on the African musicians in this situation?

Chris Collis/Warner Bros

David Byrne: In some things quite a lot; in some things not so much. I'll recapitulate it in this way: we'd work out a little structure that was more song-like, a little arrangement on a lot of the stuff we had recorded together, and then there would be the four of us joined by at least two other musicians, sometimes a third one. Usually it was a drummer, on congas—or there were some African drums that sound a little bit like congas but have a different name—a guitar player, and sometimes a keyboard player, or a percussionist who would play the bell or sticks or whatever. And the idea was that the groove would be determined by the interaction of everybody, everybody would accommodate the other people, and it wouldn't be, "Well I'm going to do this, and that's what I'm going to play." The idea would be more that when somebody else does something, you accommodate to them. You make it so that the totality works rather than it being individual parts, and they're all going together. We had a lot of stuff to start with. And we felt pretty strongly about that, so when we were joined by these other musicians, we could either stick with what we had or let it flow into whatever way it went, which often happened. A song like "(Nothing But) Flowers" obviously would have been very different if it just had one guitar on it. The whole feel is all those guitars going in and out.

SPIN: Well, you've really got it down, because a lot of people have tried to learn to play like the Zairians and found it difficult to get it just right. And it sounds right.

David Byrne: Yes. I was real happy. We traded off through the solos at the end of the tune, Yves, the other guitar player and I. We traded off little solos at the end of the tune, and I was thrilled that he and the drummer, Abdu, thought that my playing was pretty "roots," that it was very natural, and they complimented me on it and said that there were parts of that jamming instrumental thing when you couldn't tell which licks he was playing and which licks I was playing. We'd just be going in and out, and it was a wonderful feeling. We really felt as if we were—whatever—jumping cultural boundaries, and we were feeling pretty good about it, feeling kind of proud of ourselves.

Tina Weymouth: Well, Yves from the Cameroons said to me, in French, "He plays like someone from the country, *du pays*." He said that of David, which was a nice compliment.

SPIN: Given the growing success that you've had, getting a larger and larger audience, do you think it's a risky thing to do, to deal with an African collaboration more than exploring further the dimensions of your recent work like *Little Creatures* and *True Stories*?

David Byrne: I guess it is, in a way. It's certainly not geared towards a lot of what's currently on the Top Ten or what's on the radio. But I think we'd feel it would be more risky not to do something. I would hope that the people who like our stuff like it because they never know what's going to happen next, that they like it because it's kind of a surprise package. And I would hope that that's the attraction, that you don't fall too much in love with any one kind of thing. I would hope that they would fall in love with the unpredictability of it.

SPIN: You are the kind of people who have got the reputation of being innovative, and people are expecting you to be innovative. If you do something that they've heard before, they're going to criticize you for that.

Chris Frantz: It kind of happened on the last record. They said, "What is this? Are they just in a holding pattern? What's going to happen next?"

David Byrne: For us to play that kind of music was experimental for us.

Tina Weymouth: And I would say for David as a singer, it had to be a challenge. When you change from doing something which is completely in our own style and therefore doesn't really have to compete with anybody else, to try to do something in the style of others, where you know there are great

"This percussionist said, 'I have to tighten the heads.' So he goes into the bathroom, which was basically under the control room, and starts a fire and puts the drum over the fire! And flames are leaping up."

Paul Slattery

singers who can do that, or for any of us to play any of the instruments and know that there are great players, it's a whole other thing.

Jerry Harrison: I think that all of us have a similar vision in that we like doing different things. I think we're all very happy with the fact that the Talking Heads have made albums that have different places of focus. *True Stories* and *Little Creatures* were certainly the albums that were most clearly written by David alone. But this new album or *Remain in Light* or *Speaking in Tongues* were really done as a foursome, music-first. *Little Creatures* and *True Stories* were the other way around: they were much more melodic and had kind of American song structures. In *Little Creatures*, for instance, we very deliberately used instruments like organs and accordions for the keyboard player; I didn't use very synthesized sounds. We were trying to get into it like that. And I think "City of Dreams" is one of the most beautiful ballads David's ever written, and it used an acoustic piano. Each record follows a different path.

One of the things we wanted to not be is: around the world with the Talking Heads. I think the *Little Creatures* and *True Stories* period was also a little bit like: what are we going to do next, and what are we not going to do next. It wasn't, "OK, we did African music; now let's go do Indonesian *gamelan*," or some bullshit like that. I really consider there to be a clear link between African music and R&B and rock 'n' roll, and it had not been elucidated particularly clearly before. There are definite connections between Fela and James Brown. That's why we could learn about African music, because we had heard about that and read about that, and we loved James Brown, and we went and looked at it. Once we saw how great Fela was, we started looking at some of the other stuff. It wasn't because we were interested in Pygmy music or something like that. It came up from things that had already developed. It was as if we worked back from our culture, and then we realized things that people had said about these connections. An obvious other place, and I know that David really loves it, is Brazilian music, which also has a very obvious connection to African music and how it's changed in the New World, and it's somehow still really related to the forms that you find in American R&B.

Tina Weymouth: I think that right at the start, we said to ourselves, well, we've set ourselves apart in a certain way. We can't sing like those people; we can't play like those people, and there are a lot of people out there *pleasing* the audience with that kind of music. We don't fit in that, but we still need to play and satisfy ourselves, for our own needs. So for us, it has to come from a much more personal thing; it has to please us personally as opposed to thinking of what's going to please other people. So far, that has been the best way that we have pleased people, by pleasing ourselves first. And if ever we tried to please people by doing something that was in the format of "known" music, say with *Little Creatures* or *True Stories*, it didn't seem to make things more successful for us to please everyone more than what we had done before.

David Byrne: I think we're all listening to somewhat different things. And then it's always kind of changing, so that every time we get together, everybody's got some new thing that they've been into or that they've grown into in their musical interests in some way over the past year or six months or whatever it is. And without even talking about it, it kind of comes out in playing. You see a different flavor in their playing.

There are things I like, and I feel that I still haven't been able to do them. I started to get into one a little bit: crooning. I get into a little bit of crooning on this record. I use the word "crooning" with my tongue in cheek, but I try to do some sweet singing, to sing as sweetly as I can, and that's not something I've done a lot of. Sometimes I can be sentimental, but I think that if a song gets too sentimental, then it gets shallow and loses a lot of depth to people. And yet, that's something I think I touched on in this record, and I could do some more of.

SPIN: When you talk about pleasing people in your audience, are you thinking about anything specific?

Chris Frantz: I don't think any of us feel that we know exactly what we want all the time. I know I don't. I can't believe people who say they always know exactly what they want. Because if they do, where do the surprises come in?

Tina Weymouth: I think it's been thrilling for us to work with other musicians from completely different cultures and backgrounds, and to find that there was a complete sympathy and empathy with each other. That's very thrilling. And there have been moments on stage which practically induced a trance in both musicians and audience. Something happens which is hard to describe, a sense of being elevated and above and outside of ourselves, of sharing something that is the better part of ourselves, or a kind of overconsciousness or overview, that basically only happened when there seemed to be a kind of energy feedback between the audience and the performers, when you're not conscious so much of being a performer and how's that guy doing and monitoring what everyone's doing; you're doing what you do, and you're concentrating on that, and you've focused full attention on it. Most people compare thrilling experiences to sex because that's the most common thrill that people can all talk about and say, I had an ecstatic moment. And you hear musicians commonly refer to special musical moments as orgasmic because that's the way everyone can relate to it, but it's really beyond that. It becomes an involuntary reaction to something that is happening, and you start to operate at a much faster speed, where you seem to be expanding at a very, very fast rate, and things are

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LONNIE BROOKS

LIVE FROM CHICAGO

BAYOU LIGHTNING STRIKES

ALLIGATOR

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happening faster than you can think about them. And at that moment, it's like a mystical experience. I think we've all occasionally had those moments, and I know we've shared some because coming off stage, everyone would be in the same mood.

David Byrne: Sometimes I think of myself more as an appreciator or a facilitator than a creator, or that sometimes the act of creation isn't creating something in a strict sense; it's more like allowing something to happen. For me, to be known as innovative is kind of a blessing and a curse. It's a stupid Western kind of pressure, and it's that whole need for something new. Always to make something new, I think it's a very Western and European kind of neurosis that's been put on us. And yet eventually, I admit that I'm afflicted with it, and I can't get out of it. It's a blessing too, because I really enjoy it. When something new happens, it's like a new thing has come into the world. And you feel like you're somehow responsible, but not really. You've helped to cause it, but somehow it takes on a life of its own. And so it's kind of a wonderful thing to witness. And you kind of scratch your head and say, "Well, where did that really come from? I didn't plan everything out." It's great.

SPIN: Nowadays musicians from all over the world can hear each other's music. African and Cuban and Caribbean musicians are doing their things in London, Paris, and New York. At the beginning of the Eighties, someone like me, who might not have had the chops of an indigenous player, nonetheless came from your world, so to speak, and I could understand you. Did you used to find in the past, or do you still find, that musicians from other styles have had difficulty moving beyond what they "know"?

David Byrne: Exactly. From both sides. Musicians from Third World cultures and musicians like ourselves, or like myself, had difficulty coming out of what we knew. Not everything that we have tried along the lines of cultural blending, or whatever you want to call it, has been successful. And part of it was because some musicians, and we too, get set in our ways, stuck with the style that we know, and it's difficult to be flexible. And sometimes I feel that we're changing, that we're finding a common ground and a kind of common language. Not that the music's all going to get smoothed over and sound the same everywhere, but I think that we're finding that some musicians anyway are more willing to step outside what they know, the musical grammar that they know, and talk, if not in somebody else's language, at least with an accent.

I think that now, particularly in Paris and London, there are a lot of musicians from Third World countries who are more familiar than they used to be with pop songs, funk, and all that kind of stuff. There's a lot more mixing going on than there used to be. And I think it's starting to happen in New York, but it's not as prevalent as it is in those other cities. I think its always going to be more difficult in America, because in America there's so much indigenous music, whereas both France and Britain have a history of borrowing styles from other places, and learning how to do it. Britain is always taking rock 'n' roll or blues or lately they've all been playing funk and stuff like that, and most of those styles come from America. And they have a history of appreciating things that are outside of their own sphere, and then making them their own, adding a different kind of intelligence to it, and selling it back to us. And I think the French, though they don't play it themselves as much, are great appreciators of music from other places.

SPIN: I work with people who grow up playing their idioms all their lives, to get the experience they need to become able to project something that really has more depth in the way they do something. This is something you can see in these traditional places. Out there, wherever you go, there are people who are great musicians. You're looking at their musicianship, and you're looking at your own anxieties, saying, "Well, am I really up to this?"

Chris Frantz: I know that at one time, I guess it was when we were rehearsing the first time with the big band, with Bernie Worrell and Steve Scales and Busta Jones, you know, I was really nervous because I was in awe of the way these guys could play. And it was, "Wow, I'm actually playing with a funk guy." I was on edge all the time. Now I guess that I just have more confidence. Maybe I can play a little bit better; maybe I'm more relaxed. But I just don't feel intimidated by people, even if they're great, because I guess I realize that sometimes great works are not necessarily done by the best players.

David Byrne: I think that technically I'm about the same. But my ears have developed. Well, you know, I can't play any faster or any better, really, but I can listen better, hear better. I know more, and I can relax into different styles much better than I used to be able to do. I think that I can feel at home doing it, but not that I'm a better player. Somebody else could probably play it better, but I think I can kind of slip in and out of things.

"Some days I feel: Wow, if we could just have a song that sounded as joyful as K.C. & The Sunshine Band the first time I heard them, then we'd really be doing something."

Jerry Harrison: When you grow up and you're playing other people's songs, at that point, you always understand that the secret is to work and become a better musician, and you automatically do that. But I think that what happens then is, as you said, it's as if your fingers do the walking. Once your fingers are able to play all those licks, they automatically play those licks; and sometimes you never get beyond what your fingers can do. For me, what I learned in the Modern Lovers was this idea of "Get back to what you're saying." You've got something that you want to say, and it's an important thing, and you feel it with some intensity.

SPIN: Do you have a message, or a "true story," so to speak, out of or inside of which you think your music is accomplishing or trying to express something? Do you think that music can be a vehicle for a message?

Jerry Harrison: What I've been dwelling on is how music is everywhere. Rock music is almost becoming Muzak, you know, when the Beatles "Revolution" is a Nike commercial. And there's something kind of debasing about it; that is, it all starts to seem meaningless.

Peter Anderson

Tina Weymouth: We don't feel comfortable with proselytizing. You'll have to ask David, because he's the lyricist, and then we maybe can articulate on it.

David Byrne: These kinds of concerns come through mainly in the singing and the lyrics. I think I adapt them, depending on the kind of music that the band's doing. I think I adapt the lyrics, the style of writing, to fit the mood of the music. I try to. But I don't think it does it in a direct way. I don't think it does it in a way where it's stated. I don't think it's about—What the hell is it about? Well, I just think this is a hard time for a lot of people. Often, it's just about telling people that it's all right. It's saying, "It's all right, you're not alone." Or sometimes it's giving, I think, encouragement, in a way. It's giving encouragement, but not in obvious ways. The words to the songs don't say, "You can do it; go ahead; go forth." The words aren't like that, but it's more by example or by feeling or something that it comes through. That's what I get from people who talk to me about it. They say that they've gotten some kind of strength out of some of the material in the past, and that it has helped them sometimes when they've had difficult times.

It's very difficult to deal directly with issues and points in a song. I think that has happened occasionally, where a song has addressed something and acted as a catalyst for people to focus, or redirected the focus of people. But I think most of the time it's more subtle than that. A song kind of gets into your whole attitude and way of thinking, but it's not about a specific issue. Just opening things up, and being receptive to other things, other ideas, others kinds of music, other ways of thinking, and then we would hope that sets the ball in motion, and then each individual crisis takes care of itself, or it's taken care of. Maybe the music works on that level.

Jerry Harrison: I think that Bob Marley is one of the only people who's ever done overtly political music and not sounded foolish.

David Byrne: Music helps people put things in order. I think it does. I think it helps them—not in any one aspect of the music—it's kind of in the totality of the music, of the words and the beats and the sound and the texture and all of that come together. It sometimes helps people use it; they can use it in some way, whatever, as an allegory or a model or something in their life in a very natural or unconscious way. And I think it sometimes helps people to put some order to the things that have been happening to them, things that for all intents and purposes just seem chaotic.

Tina Weymouth: The thing that I keep coming up against is how much people feel that they're just going to live out their little lives. Not that they're not valid or important to their friends and loved ones, but it's that they just can't make an impression on big government, and there's just such a bigger thing happening in the world than them. What they get on TV news, etcetera, is that they just can't make a mark in this world. And the impression that I keep getting from people when I meet them is, "Wow, well, you're an individual; you're just like me; and what you represent to me is your individuality, your ability just to be a person and do what you like, and to think openly and clearly for yourself." Especially from someone who is working for a company, "You're your own boss; that's great. You have some kind of control over your life." Being an individual as opposed to being a sheep-follower. They're looking for: he got away with it. He did it and he got away with it. And that's why, when they think we're funny, that's what they are laughing about. They're saying, "How can he be so weird and not conform?" And it's like that in our whole business, the music business itself. "How can they keep selling records without having hit singles?"

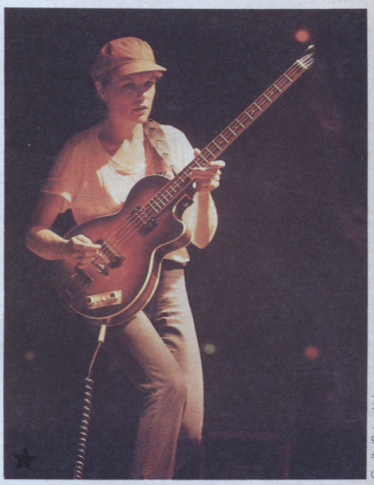
Chris Franz: To tell you the truth, my feelings about it change from day to day. To be honest, some days I feel like we're setting a great example, for other young musicians, and we're a really admirable group. Other days I feel that maybe we're letting people down because we haven't toured, and maybe we're sort of living in an ivory tower. Other days I feel: Wow, if we could just have a song that sounded as happy and as joyful as K.C. and the Sunshine Band the first time I heard them, then we'd really be doing something. So from day to day my feelings change, with my body chemistry, I suppose.

Tina Weymouth: We're not like Ziggy Marley, who is like a prophet who has a mission, you know. The whole Rastafarian thing, it's like a vision he has of—well, really what it is about is bringing up pride and human dignity.

David Byrne: I envy that. I mean, I envy that, because then everything has a focus and a purpose. And I feel that—I know for myself—I often kind of feel along as we go, and there's a pattern. In retrospect a pattern emerges, but it's not there a lot of the time.

SPIN: I know a lot of people in Ghana who would have stood forth and been happy and proud and considered it a glorious death to die in Bob Marley's place. A lot of people. They would have just done it without even hesitating. But we live in a different kind of society. What do you think about this society and the role of music in it? And what you're doing, do you feel that you're doing important work?

David Byrne: I hope so. Without being immodest, I think that in a small way, and not in an obvious way, you can change the way people think about things. I think people are going through difficult times—and I don't mean just homeless people in the street and the farmers—I mean spiritually, that people, even kids, that they're not sure about things. I'm not sure they have as much optimism about where things are headed as they might have had. And I find that it bothers me that a lot of music is treated as a commodity. You can deal with that when it's in the business, but when the listener starts talking about it that way, then you feel like there's trouble. When people talk about music as a thing or whatever, instead of being something that they can identify with as being part of their lives and speaking to them, or when it stops doing that, then music just ceases to have meaning. And I think there's a danger of that happening. And it's odd, because a lot of music can still be exciting and can still generate feelings, but it's like pushing a button, and then the motor goes. And I feel as if that sometimes happens. It happens all the time. It's not just now, but I just feel it a lot now. I can't sermonize. It's more like asking questions and asking myself, "Why do I feel this way?" And if I'm feeling this way, then obviously a lot of other people will be, too. I'm not so special and unique that I'm the only one having these feelings.



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Jerry Harrison: The audiences I *know* as Talking Heads audiences are mainly the audiences I remember from when we were a smaller band, because those are the audiences that I could see closely when we played in clubs. The lights were on, and you could see them. The Talking Heads was one of the first bands to say, "Hey, you don't have to be someone you aren't; it's OK just to be yourself and do a good job at being yourself."